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Ministry of Colleges & Universities
Statement and speech
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
TECHNICAL COLLEGES

STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE HARRY C. PARROTT, D.D.S.
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CONCERNING
RESEARCHERS' REPORTS
ON THE
PROGRESS OF STUDENTS
FROM
HIGH SCHOOL TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

JANUARY 18, 1977



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MY MINISTRY WELCOMES THE PUBLICATION OF THESE STUDIES. THEY COME AFTER MANY MONTHS OF PLANNING AND HARD WORK. WE THINK THAT THEY PROVIDE A GOOD FACTUAL BACKGROUND FROM WHICH WE, THE ADVISORY COUNCILS, THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY CAN REVIEW POLICIES AFFECTING THE FLOW OF STUDENTS FROM HIGH SCHOOLS TO POST SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS.

THE REPORTS HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES, THE COMMITTEE OF PRESIDENTS OF THE COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY, THE UNIVERSITIES, THE COLLEGES AND OTHERS. IF THESE ORGANIZATIONS WANT TO SUBMIT BRIEFS, THEY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DO SO BY MARCH 31. I WILL BE LOOKING TO THE ONTARIO COUNCIL ON UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS AND THE COUNCIL OF REGENTS FOR THE COLLEGES TO PROVIDE ME WITH POLICY ADVICE AFTER THEY HAVE REVIEWED THE REPORTS AND BRIEFS.

AFTER A PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF THE REPORTS, I AM CONVINCED THAT THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN SERIOUS STUDY BY THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES. I AM GLAD THAT THE PUBLIC AND STUDENTS FEEL THAT THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IS GOOD AND THAT MONEY ON THIS SECTOR IS WELL SPENT. I HAVE ALSO NOTED THAT THE PUBLIC APPEARS TO FEEL THAT MORE MONEY SHOULD NOT BE SPENT IN THIS AREA.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE FAVOURABLE PUBLIC VIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, IT WOULD BE SURPRISING IF THERE WERE NOT A NUMBER OF POINTS ARISING FROM THE STUDIES WHICH THE UNIVERSITIES WOULD BE EXPECTED TO ADDRESS. I WILL MENTION ONLY A FEW OF THEM.

SOME UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS HAVE CRITICISED THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM BECAUSE OF VARIATIONS IN THE BACKGROUNDS OF STUDENTS COMING FROM THAT SYSTEM. HOWEVER, THE REPORTS SHOW THAT THERE ARE ALSO CONSIDERABLE VARIATIONS AMONG UNIVERSITIES IN TERMS OF THEIR POLICIES CONCERNING PREREQUISITE SUBJECTS.

IN SOME CASES, THERE IS A SUGGESTION OF UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION, WITH UNIVERSITIES TEACHING MATERIAL ALSO TAUGHT AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL. THERE IS ALSO EVIDENCE OF GRADE INFLATION AT THE UNIVERSITIES AND OF VARIATIONS IN MARKING STANDARDS AMONG UNIVERSITIES.

THE STUDIES ALSO SUGGEST TO ME THAT THE UNIVERSITIES SHOULD GIVE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THE DESIRABILITY OF DEVELOPING COMMON DESCRIPTIONS OF THE BACKGROUND SKILLS ACTUALLY NEEDED BY INCOMING STUDENTS IN THE VARIOUS SUBJECTS, TO HELP STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOLS THAT ARE PREPARING THEM.

ON THE VERY SENSITIVE MATTER OF ADMISSION TO UNIVERSITY, THE PUBLIC HAS EVERY RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT PEOPLE SELECTED TO ENTER THESE COSTLY INSTITUTIONS WILL BE ADEQUATELY PREPARED FOR THEM. THE STUDIES SUGGEST THAT MOST EDUCATORS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC STILL FEEL THAT GRADE 13 SHOULD BE RETAINED AS THE BASIS FOR PREPARING STUDENTS FOR UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE. ONE OF THE STUDIES FOUND THAT SCHOOL MARKS ARE PROBABLY AS GOOD A PREDICTOR OF UNIVERSITY SUCCESS AS EVER, ALTHOUGH SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WERE NOTED IN MARKING STANDARDS FROM SCHOOL TO SCHOOL.

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS WE HAVE BEEN ASSISTING THE UNIVERSITIES IN FINANCING AN EXPERIMENTAL TESTING PROGRAM. COMMON ACHIEVEMENT TESTS COULD SUPPLEMENT SCHOOL MARKS AND FORM PART OF THE OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PREPAREDNESS FOR UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE OR FOR PLACEMENT IN LIMITED ENROLMENT PROGRAMS OR PARTICULAR COURSES.

HOWEVER, I SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THE UNIVERSITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS AND WE INTEND TO RESPECT THEIR PREROGATIVE. CONSEQUENTLY ANY CHANGES WITH REGARD TO TESTING FOR ADMISSION WILL BE CHANGES INITIATED BY THE UNIVERSITIES THEMSELVES, NOT BY THE GOVERNMENT.

TURNING NOW TO THE COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY, THE STUDIES INDICATE THAT THE COLLEGES HAVE PERFORMED WELL IN MEETING THE DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING NEEDS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO WISH TO TAKE CAREER ORIENTED PROGRAMS.

THE STUDIES CONFIRM THE VIEW THAT THE INTERFACE BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES IS PARTICULARLY COMPLEX BECAUSE OF THE WIDE SELECTION OF COURSES AVAILABLE TO GRADUATES AT THE GRADE 12 LEVEL AND THE EQUALLY BROAD CHOICE OF PROGRAMS IN THE COLLEGES. THIS VARIETY OF CHOICE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE INTERFACE INEVITABLY LEADS TO SOME DUPLICATION OR GAPS IN COURSE OFFERINGS. COLLEGES WILL NO DOUBT WANT TO STUDY THIS ASPECT OF THE RESEARCH TO MINIMIZE THESE GAPS AND DUPLICATIONS WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

THE STUDIES ALSO SUGGEST THAT A NEED EXISTS FOR CLOSER CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TEACHERS. SUCH A LINKAGE COULD LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON EXPECTATION OF THE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT IN LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICAL SKILLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO ARE PLANNING TO ENROL IN COLLEGE PROGRAMS.

IN CONCLUSION, THE STUDIES INDICATE THAT ON THE WHOLE, THE POST SECONDARY SYSTEM IS MEETING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF A GREATLY INCREASING NUMBER OF STUDENTS EMERGING

FROM THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM. AFTER WE HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ANALYSE THESE MATTERS IN MORE DEPTH, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE STUDIES WILL HELP US TO BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS WHERE NECESSARY AND TO CONTINUE ADAPTING TO SOCIETY'S CHANGING REQUIREMENTS.

END

